

Amberley Village Council – Compensation and Benefits Committee  
Minutes of March 4, 2014

In Attendance: R. Warren (Chair), W. Doering, P. Conway, T. Muething, E. Hattenbach, N. Wolf, Manager S. Lahrmer, Chief R. Wallace, Lt. J. Fryman, K. Harcourt, T. Chaiken, S. Lefton, T. Chesney, R. Kemp, M. Roeder, R. Rump, A. Act, T. Karr, and C. Driscoll

The meeting was brought to order.

The minutes from the February 18, 2014 were distributed. A sentence was added to the penultimate paragraph to read, 'Mrs. Conway (Police/Fire Committee) with Chief Wallace will be reviewing fire pay.' The minutes were approved.

This meeting was to discuss employee wage compensation. Mr. Lahrmer noted that in the last year one police employee had left the Village for a department in another jurisdiction. While the person's starting salary was less than what he was earning in the Village, the person felt it would be made up in later years. A maintenance employee also left the Village for another jurisdiction. This was related to pay due to a lack of advancement opportunity (apparently he had been told he would progress, but this did not happen). In the search for replacements it was noted that approximately 50 people applied for each open position. The advertising cost for recruiting totaled about \$6000.

There was a question raised regarding implementation of a merit pay system, as opposed to an across the board pay increase. It was noted that former Village Manager Boraten had a discretionary fund to dispense merit pay. Mr. Chesney noted that this was more of a discretionary wage bonus than strict merit pay. That is, wages were adjusted across the board for all employees and at the end of the calendar year, there would be a discretionary pay adjustment. Mr. Lahrmer felt that pending resolution of other Village financial concerns, implementation of merit pay should be placed on hold. Mr. Doering suggested that the Village study any pay inequity in the Maintenance and Administration Departments.

Chief Wallace brought up an email that was distributed by Mr. Warren to several village residents and that it was disruptive to the compensation review process. Mr. Warren noted that the content of the email had to do with when this meeting would be held, the employee request for a 4% pay increase, soliciting attendance for this meeting, and if there were comments they could be directed to me. Mr. Warren asserted that what he shared was public information, there was nothing dishonest in the email, and he had received replies that were both supportive and not supportive of the employee pay increase request. Some of those in attendance complained of not having receiving Mr. Warren's email. Mr. Warren shared there was nothing else in the email and if anyone wanted a copy, he would forward it.

Chief Wallace shared an update of police salaries across 21 departments in Hamilton County (attached). This was an update from the survey he had collected last year during a similar wage review process. Mr. Doering prepared a modified version of this survey

(attached) in which he averaged the police pay (some police position pay was described as 'starting and top pay'). Across all positions that were evaluated, including lieutenant, sergeant (included detective position), patrolman, dispatcher, and clerk, Amberley's current wage was above the average (range of ~\$200 to \$6600 above the average pay). His survey also indicated the effect of various pay increase adjustments from 1% to 4%. Mr. Warren shared that based on his analysis of Chief Wallace's data, for the three years 2011-2013, the cumulative pay increase for Amberley Village police officers was 8<sup>th</sup> out of 21 departments. This exceeded Indian Hill. Mr. Doering also noted that the Consumer Price Index had increased by 1.5-1.7%.

Mr. Doering proposed a wage increase of 2% that would also apply to Fire pay (last increase was in 2009) and would take effect April 1, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Conway.

During the discussion Mr. Lahrmer shared several pieces of information. He noted that for the period 2009-2014 the cumulative percent wage increase for Amberley relative to 8 other jurisdictions was at the low end (these data were extracted from the attachment from February's Compensation and Benefits Committee). This survey excluded most of the jurisdictions from Chief Wallace's survey. Mr. Lahrmer also noted that from 2009 through 2013 the average earnings tax increase was approximately 2% and the 2014 budget projected an additional 2% increase. Each 1% pay increase would cost the village approximately \$26,000.

Mr. Hattenbach noted that the Village should review the entire wage structure and that pay should be commensurate to the skill set. He also suggested that the Village should consider additional sources of revenue such as increasing the charge for home alarm monitoring.

Mr. Bardach shared that he felt the wage increase should be at least 3%. Ms. Wolf concurred.

Lt. Fryman noted that in years past the Village wage structure was in the top 3 across County departments. This was one an attractive factor for hiring and retaining officers.

The vote on the motion was taken and passed, two in favor (Mr. Doering and Mr. Warren) and one opposed (Mrs. Conway).

There be no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ray Warren